



Improvement Status

Improvements in the condition of railroad lines by upgrading track with funding from a variety of sources continue. The commencement of the Downeaster Amtrak service in 2001, the Freight Main Line owned and operated by Guilford Rail System (now Pan Am Railways) was preceded by an upgrade with new ties, ballast and continuous welded rail funded by the Federal Transit Administration. This line, with 35 miles in New Hampshire, has been maintained at Class 3 or better and with additional trackage in the Dover area. The New England Central's Connecticut River line has been recently upgraded to Class 3 in part with a grant from the Federal Railroad Administration and, with the completion in 2012-2013 of this project, the Amtrak Vermonter schedule will reflect higher speeds and improved performance of freight traffic on the line. Portions of two other lines, the St. Lawrence & Atlantic and the NH Northcoast, have been upgraded to Class 3 with railroad funds and state and federal loan and grant funds.

The State and its railroad partners continue to explore funding opportunities to complete upgrades of these and other rail lines. The Department is working with the railroads to seek funding to complete certain track upgrades, and the goals for 2015 and 2017 reflect the desire to complete these projects. Specifically, the St. Lawrence & Atlantic is aggressively seeking to upgrade its line in the North Country, in order to serve its customers in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont with a line that has full clearance for double-stack containers and heavier weight limits now prevalent in the railroad industry. Completing the upgrade to this line is included as a goal for 2015. For 2017, it is a goal to upgrade the NH Northcoast line from Rollinsford to Ossipee, which handles heavy sand and gravel cars. Another goal is to complete an upgrade of Pan Am's New Hampshire Main Line through Nashua and Manchester. This would facilitate development of passenger service on the line as well as improve the railroad's ability to serve freight customers.

The graph below provides estimates of the miles of track maintained at Class 3 or above, reflecting changes if funding is available to complete improvements on the lines described above.

Improve Asset Conditions

Rail Lines Capable of Speeds of 40 mph

Purpose:

The approximately 450 miles of active railroad in New Hampshire are classified as to condition according to a system established by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Track may be subject to slow orders due to local or temporary conditions, but in general, class of track is a measure that provides an indication of the general condition of railroad track infrastructure. FRA Class 3 track allows operation of freight rail at up to 40 mph and passenger rail at up to 60 mph. Track at this classification would provide satisfactory performance of both freight and passenger operations in nearly all cases. Establishing goals for the total miles of active track at Class 3 would provide an effective measure of overall condition of the railroads in the state, recognizing that track is maintained and repaired by private railroad companies primarily with private capital.

NHDOT and a consultant team updated the state's rail plan in 2012, including an inventory of the state's railroads and their condition. The plan also provides goals for this measure in future years.

Data:

As noted above, railroads establish the classification of their track according to standards established by the Federal Railroad Administration. The classifications are based on standards that define the level of maintenance needed for safe operation, and determine the allowable speeds for freight and passenger trains according to the following table (mph):

Class	Freight	Passenger
1	10	15
2	25	30
3	40	60
4	60	80
5	80	90
6	110	110
7	125	125
8	160	160
9	200	200

The class of track is determined by the condition of rail, ties, stone ballast and other components, inspected and rated against quantitative measures published in Federal Railroad Administration rules at 49 CFR Part 213.

Class 3 Track Conditions

